

IN THE CLAIMS

Pursuant to 37 CFR §1.121(c), the following listing, including the text of the claims in the amendment document will serve to replace all prior versions of the claims in the application, and incorporates the amendments made by this Paper.

Please amend claims 1 through 17, 20, 22 through 24, 26 and 29 as follows:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing and separating ~~an imbricate~~
2 ~~formation of~~ flexible, flat objects during product feed, ~~comprising~~ comprised of:
3 continuously feeding ~~[[the items]]~~ flexible objects to a transfer module in
4 an essentially regular imbricate formation ~~as to a transfer module and transferring the~~
5 ~~[[items from]]~~ flexible objects fluently advance along a guide within said transfer module
6 with leading lower edges of the flexible objects supported on a surface of the ~~said transfer~~
7 ~~module to a conveyor module, wherein flat objects are fluently fed to a guide within said~~
8 ~~transfer module, and~~ with a trailing edge of each flexible object lying over the leading
9 lower edge of a subsequent flexible object;
10 erecting the ~~[[flat]]~~ flexible objects during ~~their conveyance are brought~~
11 said product feed along the guide into an obliquely standing positions ~~position by the~~
12 guide with leading upper edges of the flexible objects exhibiting inclinations opposite to
13 orientations of the flexible objects when initially erected ~~[[,]]; and~~
14 accommodating separation of the ~~[[flat]]~~ flexible objects from the obliquely
15 standing positions with leading upper edges of the flexible objects exhibiting inclinations
16 opposite to orientations of the flexible objects when erected, this position are separated in
17 a defined number from the ~~remaining flat~~ flexible objects ~~by a separator remaining~~
18 supported by the guide, and conveyed conveyance away from the transfer module by a

19 conveyor.

1 2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein~~ comprised of
2 the ~~[[flat]]~~ flexible objects ~~are fed onto a guide surface of the guide and are conveyed~~
3 ~~lying in an overlapping manner, wherein the trailing edge of a flat object in each case lies~~
4 ~~over [[the]] a leading edge of the subsequent flat object, and the objects during the~~
5 ~~transport~~ said advance of the flexible objects over the surface of the guide surface the
6 flexible objects are continuously ~~erected rotated~~, ~~whereby on removal of the flat objects~~
7 ~~from the guide~~ orientation of the flexible objects in said obliquely standing position of
8 ~~the flat objects~~ is inclined opposite to a ~~direction~~ orientation of ~~said conveyance the~~
9 flexible objects when erected.

1 3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~[[flat]]~~
2 flexible objects are folded sheets, ~~wherein the~~ whereby a fold of each folded sheet lies in
3 a trailing manner ~~[[lies]]~~ over a respective subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets
4 ~~which stand~~ obliquely ~~on removal~~ standing at said conveyance away from the guide
5 ~~means~~ stand on ~~[[their]]~~ cut-edge ~~side~~ sides.

1 4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein the ~~[[flat]]~~
2 flexible objects are folded sheets, wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing
3 manner lies over the respective subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand
4 obliquely on removal from the guide ~~means~~ stand on ~~their~~ corresponding cut-edge ~~side~~
5 sides of the folded sheets.

1 5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~erection~~
2 rotation of the ~~[[flat]]~~ flexible objects is effected by active braking or acceleration of the
3 ~~[[flat]] flexible objects along~~ at least one edge by ~~way of~~ independently driving each of a
4 plurality of conveyor means conveying elements disposed upon the guide.

1 6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein the flat~~
2 ~~objects on removal are actively transferred into an obliquely standing position in the~~
3 ~~conveying direction by way of folding-over means~~ comprised of contributing to said
4 rotation by sequentially urging upper edges of the flexible objects in a direction of said
5 advance.

1 7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~wherein the flat~~
2 ~~objects before removal are displaced transversely to their main conveying direction~~
3 comprised of contributing to said rotation by individually regulating movement of a
4 plurality of conveyors disposed along said guide to movingly engage the lower edges.

1 8. (Currently Amended) ~~A device for carrying out the~~ The method according to
2 claim 1 ~~with a product feed, comprising a conveyor means with a transfer module~~
3 ~~arranged after this and with a conveyor module for removal of flat objects from the~~
4 ~~transfer module;~~

5 ~~wherein the transfer module contains a guide means which comprises a guide~~
6 ~~surface which at least in regions is inclined with respect to the horizontal, and that on the~~
7 ~~side proximal to the removal device there is arranged a brim or abutment,~~ comprised of
8 contributing to said rotation by terminating said guide with an abutment oriented

9 outwardly from said guide in a direction of said advance.

1 9. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to~~ method of claim 8 1, wherein a
2 surface of the guide surface at least in regions is designed concave or convex, or
3 comprises at least two sections with a different inclination of the guide surface
4 inclinations.

1 10. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to~~ method of claim 8 1, wherein
2 the inclination of comprised of the guide surface at least in regions is having a downward
3 inclination along a direction of said advance of more than 30°.

1 11. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to~~ method of claim 8 1, wherein
2 the guide ~~surface~~ comprises guide elements ~~which serve for the~~ providing regional
3 acceleration and[[/or]] braking of the ~~flat~~ flexible objects.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to~~ method of claim 8 1, wherein
2 ~~the brim or the~~ comprised of said transfer module having an abutment ~~is arranged~~
3 ~~movable with respect~~ adjustably positionable relative to the guide means.

1 13. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to~~ method of claim 8 1, wherein,
2 ~~on that side of the guide means which is proximal to the removal device, there are~~
3 ~~arranged active means for separating~~ comprised of a separator disposed in proximity to
4 said guide to make said separation of individual flexible objects or groups of the flexible
5 objects.

1 14. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to method of~~ claim 8 1, wherein
2 ~~the brim or the abutment comprises~~ with the transfer module comprising a plurality of
3 ~~movable elements conveying the~~ flexible objects in ~~the removal~~ a direction of said
4 advance.

1 15. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to method of~~ claim 8 1, wherein,
2 ~~in the removal region of the objects, there are arranged means for~~ with the transfer
3 module comprising a transverse shift disposed to transversely displacing displace the
4 flexible objects obliquely standing within a terminal portion of said guide.

1 16. (Currently Amended) The ~~device according to method of~~ claim 8 1, wherein,
2 comprised of a retainer disposed above the guide ~~means, there are arranged retaining~~
3 ~~means acting on the~~ to act upon free ~~edge~~ edges of the objects.

1 17. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) A guide, comprising:
2 a path comprised of a first surface guiding leading lower edges of a
3 plurality of flat, flexible items in an imbricate array to a curved surface extending
4 downwardly from said first surface to an inclined surface, said path supporting the lower
5 edges of the items during progressive transformation in orientation from leading to
6 trailing lower edges of the items ~~into an imbricate array~~ while the items advance from
7 said first surface and along said inclined surface; and
8 an abutment extending transversely above said path to obstructively engage
9 seriatim a lower portion of each of the items descending said ~~convexly curved~~ inclined

10 surface and terminate said passage of each item along said inclined surface while the item
11 is obliquely erect with trailing lower edges.

1 18. (Withdrawn) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of a mechanism
2 positioned to remove the items from engagement with said abutment by grasping the
3 upper edges of a defined number of the items and sequentially lifting the items grasped
4 away from said inclined surface.

1 19. (Withdrawn) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of said inclined
2 surface exhibiting an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1 20. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) A guide, comprising:
2 an abutment; and
3 a path comprised of a first surface positioned to continuously receive
4 leading lower edges of a flow of flat, flexible items, and ~~a curved~~ an intermediate surface
5 leading downwardly from said first surface to an inclined surface terminated by said
6 abutment ~~while~~ with said path ~~supports~~ supporting the leading lower edges of the items
7 ~~with while~~ said flow ~~of the flexible items advancing~~ advances the flexible items from said
8 first surface ~~during~~ and contributes to progressive transformation in orientation of the
9 items within the flow from upper edges of the items trailing into a formation with the
10 items oriented obliquely erect at said abutment with the lower edges trailing.

1 21. (Withdrawn) The guide of claim 20, comprising a conveyor positioned to
2 sequentially remove from said path, a defined number of the items embraced by said

3 abutment.

1 22. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) The guide of claim 20, with said
2 ~~curved~~ intermediate surface comprising a convex curve.

1 23. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) The guide of claim 20, with said
2 ~~curved~~ intermediate surface comprising a concave curve.

1 24. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) The guide of claim 20, comprised of
2 said first surface disposed to engage cut edges of the items ~~with~~ while folded edges of the
3 items ~~trailing~~ trail the cut edges along said first surface.

1 25. (Withdrawn) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said path engaging cut
2 edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first
3 surface.

1 26. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) Guiding flexible, flat objects
2 during product feed, comprised of:

3 receiving leading lower edges of a flow of flat flexible items ~~upon~~ in an
4 essentially regular imbricate formation onto a guide comprising a first surface leading to
5 a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with upper edges of the
6 items trailing the lower edges during said flow along said first surface;

7 aligning the items by precipitating a shift in orientation of the items within
8 the flow as the items progress from said first surface via said curved surface and along a

9 downwardly inclined surface ~~with~~ terminated by an abutment extending transversely
10 across said inclined surface causing an obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a
11 forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is obliquely erect with lower edges
12 of the items trailing the upper edges; and

13 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 27. (Withdrawn) Guiding, as set forth in clam 26, comprised of removing the
2 items from said engagement by individually engaging the upper edges and sequentially
3 lifting the items corresponding to the upper edges away from said inclined surface.

1 28. (Withdrawn) Guiding, as set forth in clam 26, comprised of providing said
2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1 29. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) Guiding flexible, flat objects
2 during product feed, comprised of:

3 receiving cut leading edges of a flow of flat flexible items ~~upon~~ in an
4 essentially regular imbricate formation onto a guide comprising a first surface leading to
5 a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with folded edges of the
6 items trailing the cut edges during said flow along said first surface;

7 aligning the items within the flow by allowing the flow to progress from
8 said first surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined surface ~~with~~
9 terminated by an abutment extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an
10 obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a forwardmost of the items while the
11 forwardmost item is obliquely erect with folded edges of the items leading the cut edges;

12 and

13 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 30. (Withdrawn) Guiding, as set forth in claim 29, comprised of removing the
2 items from said engagement by sequentially grasping individual ones of the folded edges
3 and individually lifting the items corresponding to the folded edges grasped away from
4 said inclined surface.

1 31. (Withdrawn) Guiding, as set forth in claim 29, comprised of providing said
2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.